



Pakistan flays Indian bid to 'distort' army chief's speech

• Indian media's heavily slanted account prompted its External Affairs ministry to accuse Pakistan of 'nuclear sabre-rattling'
• Islamabad blames New Delhi's chronic tendency to distort facts; terms insinuations against military command structure 'self-serving construct'

By Baqir Sajjad Syed

ISLAMABAD: A major controversy erupted after Indian officials and media outlets tried to blame Pakistan for what they called threats of "nuclear blackmail".

Lahore court rejected the claim a "distorted" interpretation of remarks made by Field Marshal Asim Munir during his US visit, calling it "immature".

The fracas began after an Indian news outlet claimed to reconstruct comments made by the army chief in Tampa last week.

Attributed to unnamed participants, the Indian media's account of the event alleged the army chief had threatened to use of nuclear weapons, and missile strikes against New Delhi.

Pakistan denied a venomous statement from the Indian External Affairs ministry pointing accusatory fingers at Pakistan's command and control structure and alleging links with militant groups.

Pakistani officials, however, insisted the comments were heavily slanted to malign the country and advance an Indian agenda.

On Friday, the field marshal addressed a gathering of the Pakistani community in Florida, where — in wide ranging remarks

— he spoke about how both India and Pakistan were nuclear armed countries.

In that context, he reportedly said, the comments from Indian side haven't been encouraging when it comes to peace between two countries.

Reportedly referring to India's tall claims about erasing Pakistan from the face of the earth, he said that noted that any conflict between the two nuclear armed neighbours would have a catastrophic impact for the region and beyond.

According to one of the participants of the gathering, the field marshal reportedly said that if the Indians think they can nuke Pakistan and get rid of it, they don't seem to understand that the impact of such a move would not just affect India and South Asia's borders alone, and possibly half of the world will be impacted.

However, Indian outlet The Print offered what seemed to be a more slanted account, claiming that the field marshal had threatened India with nuclear war.

It quoted the army chief as saying: "I think if we are going down, we'll take half the world down with us".

This characterisation prompted the Indian Ministry of External Affairs to issue a statement.

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TUESDAY

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Business environment

Business environment

SECURITY personnel guard the main bazaar in Khar during a 12-hour curfew in Bajaur.—Photo by Anwarullah Khan

Bajaur 'targeted operation' resumes after talks failure

- Militant hideouts pounded as district admin imposes 12-hour curfew till Monday
- Jirga leader censures admin for not consulting residents, demands facilities for displaced families
- More than 300 families flee restive tehsils ahead of curfew; displaced people to be housed in schools

By Anwarullah Khan

BAJAU: A "targeted military" operation to eliminate militants in Bajaur's Lowi Mamund tehsil resumed on Monday as the provincial government imposed a curfew in several areas of the restive tehsil for three months. It came after that attacked criticism from the residents.

The offensive named "Operation Sarbak" was initially launched on July 29, but it was postponed the next day after the peace talks between the Bajaur Amn Jirga and local militant commanders inched forward. However, the talks for the relocation of militants to Afghanistan, after months of negotiations, fell through on Friday evening due to a stalemate on some issues.

On Monday, the security forces reportedly assisted by the gunship helicopters and artillery, pounded militant hideouts in Lowi Mamund and War Mamund tehsils, located in the northern part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home Department. It has imposed a 12-hour curfew on several key roads in the district, including the Khar-Munda road, Khar-Nawagai Road,

which connects Khar to the district headquarters. However, no loss of life was reported on the first day of the operation, which continued till sunset.

The army's media wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations, did not issue a statement.

Due to the curfew announced by the district administration over major roads and trade centers remained closed, and the restrictions in over two dozen villages of Lowi Mamund and War Mamund tehsils would remain in place till Aug 14.

The notification was posted on the Deputy Commissioner's official Facebook page around 2am on Monday. According to the notification, the district administration has imposed a 12-hour curfew on several key roads in the district, including the Khar-Munda road, Khar-Nawagai Road,

Continued on Page 5

Sharifs convene in Murree to discuss by-polls

By Zulqarnain Tahir

LAHORE: The ruling PML-N senior leaders discussed upcoming by-polls, local bodies elections in Punjab and overall performance of the federal and provincial governments at a huddle in Murree hill station.

PM-N President Nawaz Sharif presided over the meeting at his Murree residence in which Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, along with federal and provincial leaders — members Rana Sanaullah, Ahsan Iqbal, Khawaja Asif, Azam Nazir Tarar, Dr Taqeer Shah and Ameen Muqam, Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Khuraja Saad, Rafique Abbasi, Amna Riaz, and retired Capt Muhammad Sadiq were present.

"The meeting discussed upcoming by-polls and local body elections. Suitable candidates will be finalized soon," the schedule of all by-elections is announced. The huddle was told that the local body election had already been delayed and now it's time to conduct it," PM's adviser and PML-N Punjab president Rana Sanaullah told Dawn on the occasion.

Twelve opposition Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers in Punjab have been disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) following

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US designates BLA as foreign terrorist outfit

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: The United States on Monday formally designated the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its cohort wing, the Majeed Brigade, as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO), adding the latter as an alias to BLA's existing Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) status.

"Today, the Department of State is designating the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its alias, the Majeed Brigade, as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO), and adding the Majeed Brigade as an alias to BLA's previous Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) designation," the State Department said in its statement.

The statement recalled that "BLA was designated as an SDGT in 2019 following several terrorist attacks. Since 2019, BLA has claimed responsibility for additional attacks, including by the Majeed Brigade."

Among the recent incidents cited were 2022 roadside bombings near Karachi airport and at the Gwadar Port Authority Complex, and the March

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ON OTHER PAGES



Protests erupt against razing of mosque

Various religious groups joined hands on Monday to protest against the demolition of a mosque in Islamabad. The JUI-F, along with other groups, held a protest at the site of the demolished Madina mosque near Rawal Dam Chowk. The protesters uprooted the saplings planted by the CDA along the route. The mosque had been demolished late on Saturday night. Page 8

PTI top brass convicted in two more May 9 cases

- Lahore court imprisons Yasmin, Ejaz, Cheema for 10 years; Aliya, Sanam get five years; Qureshi acquitted again
- PTI denounces verdicts as 'brazen affront to justice', vows to challenge them in court
- Asad Qaiser says party to demand 'real freedom' on Independence Day

By Wajid Ahmad Sheikh and Ikrar Junaidi

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court in Lahore on Monday sentenced several senior PTI leaders to 10 years of imprisonment in two separate cases concerning the May 9 violence, while it acquitted PTI vice chief Shah Mahmood Qureshi, among other party workers.

The decisions were announced by ATC Judge Manzoor Ali Gill at Kot Lakhpat Jail in the presence of

accused. Before these orders, an ATC in the provincial capital last month convicted the PTI leaders in the Sherpa Bridge attack case.

Convictions of PTI leaders spark protests in NA : Page 3

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By Numan Khan

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Four robbers killed in 'encounter'

SAHIWAL: Four suspected outlaws were killed in an overnight encounter with the Crime Control Department (CCD) on Tankhali Road, Pakpattan.

According to sources, seven unknown armed persons set up a picket on a road and looted villagers and passersby. Upon receiving information, Zaman Rasheed, Station House Officer of CCD Pakpattan, rushed to the scene with a team.

The suspects opened fire upon police vans, prompting CCD personnel to retaliate. Reports indicate that the exchange of gunfire lasted approximately 20 minutes. Later police recovered four bodies from the road and surrounding area.

CCD officials stated that three suspects managed to escape under the cover of darkness while a policeman was injured. The police van sustained damage during the crossfire.

SHO Zaman Rasheed claimed recovery of a substantial cache of ammunition and from the site.

Rescue 1122 teams transported the injured officer and the deceased to District Headquarters (DHO) Hospital, Pakpattan.

— Correspondent

Minor house help tortured to death

GUJARANWALA: A 13-year-old domestic worker was allegedly tortured to death by her employers in Krishan Nagar (Faisalabad) locality of Gujranwala on Monday.

In the first Information report (FIR) lodged with Model Town police, Abid Ali, a labourer from Noshera Virkan, said that he had left his daughter, Erum, for work at the house of Maqbool, son of Hajji Amin. On Monday, Amin telephoned him, claiming that Erum had suffered a heart attack and died.

The complainant said he rushed to the house, took the body home. During burial, they noticed multiple injury marks on the body of Erum while her hands and feet were swollen. Suspecting foul play, he alleged that Maqbool, his brother Kamran, Maqbool's wife Shumaila, and two unidentified accomplices had tortured Erum to death. He claimed that his minor daughter had not died of a heart attack.

The police registered a case against the five suspects.

SSP Operations Rizwan Tariq said the investigation was underway and the suspects would face the full force of the law if found guilty. — Correspondent

Contempt notice to Omar Ayub

TOBA TEK SINGH: Faisalabad Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Javed Iqbal Sheikh issued on Monday a contempt of court notice to the PTI leader Omar Ayub, who was convicted in May 9 cases.

The court directed Faisalabad CPO to produce Omar Ayub on August 18 after arresting him.

The contempt notice had been issued over some remarks the PTI leader posted on his X account. — Correspondent

Two minor sisters, friend drown in pond

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Three minor girls, two of them sisters, allegedly drowned in a pond in the mountainous tribal area of Rakhi Moun on Monday.

According to Koh Sulaiman Political Assistant and Border Military Police Commandant Amir Taimor, the girls, identified as Hanif Mal (11), Khan Mal (8), both daughters of Noor Muhammad, along with their friend Bani Mal (8), daughter of Gul Gul, went to fetch water from a pond.

As they were taking water from the pond, one of them lost balance and fell into the water. In a bid to save her, the two others also jumped into the pond and drowned, he said.

Rescue teams reached the spot after being called and retrieved the bodies, which were later handed over to their devastated families. — Correspondent

Two more derailments leave question mark over PR safety standards

By Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: A day after the derailment of two coaches of the Peshawar-bound Awam Express near the Khapur railway station near Rahim Yar Khan, another 115-down, Multan-bound Musa Pak Express also got off the track and entered the loop-line, ultimately hitting the sand-hump in the wee hours of Monday.

At least four passengers were left injured after the train's diesel engine and a passenger coach derailed completely. The injured were immediately taken to a nearby government hospital.

"The railway is currently passing through very serious operational challenges, as the number of derailments and accidents is rising, badly damaging the locomotives, coaches and other rolling stock, track and interlocking/signaling system, etc," an official told Dawn on Monday on the condition of anonymity.

The accidents are also leaving passengers and crew members injured, besides creating fear among those opting to travel by trains," the official added, deplored that the authorities are not taking appropriate steps to deal with the situation.

As per officials, after the derailment at Rawind station, many locals rushed to the spot, while a large number of passengers also got off the train. A relief train was immediately dispatched to the accident site from the Lahore railway station in a bid to pull back the engine and passenger coach from the sand-hump, they added.

A relief train, consisting of a new locomotive, along with a passenger coach, was also dispatched to the site to complete the train's composition and dispatch it for the final destination—Multan. However, various passengers, particularly those travelling in the derailed coach, left the train and departed for their respective destinations by road.

According to the initial investigation, the locomotive's driver exceeded speed limit and failed to apply brakes on time. As a result the train entered the dead-end line.

The report says the derailment was caused by overshooting/over-speeding, stating that the train had a total 11 coaches, having a 450-tonne load, derailed on a curve of radius 6324. Later the train departed from Jia Bugga station at 1:08am and its reception was arranged at Rawind station on down main line and reception signals were lowered properly. At 1:16am, the train engine along with the coaches No 12050, engine No 12050 and the sand-hump and derailed.

"After examining the site of the accident and collecting evidence, (it transpired) the train engine and the coach entered the sand-hump, derailing both by all wheels. We concluded that the driver of the train failed to control and stop the train at line No 4 (down) well on time and entered the sand-hump."

The report, signed by five officials, concluded.

The Peshawar-bound Awam Express train's two coaches suffered derailment near Khapur station, suspending rail traffic on the main line on Sunday.

The Awam Express' five coaches reportedly derailed due to negligence of the engineers, who allegedly failed to correctly operate the interlocking system (Kanta). Same day, Jaffar Express' five coaches were derailed in Balochistan due to an IED blast on the track carried out by terrorists. On Aug 2, an economy-class coach of the Business Express train derailed in the yard of Karachi Cantt Railway Station.

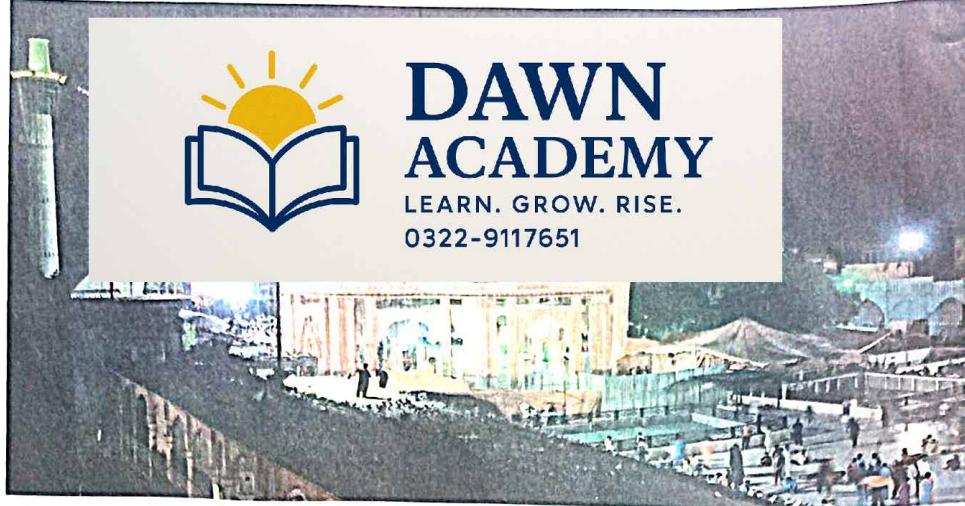
Moreover, on Aug 1, almost all coaches of the Rawalpindi-bound Islamabad Express derailed between Kal Shah Kaku and Muridke, leaving several passengers injured, besides causing massive damage to the rolling stock and a large portion of the track.



A DERAILED coach of Musa Pak Express. — Dawn

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LAHORE: Illuminations at Data Darbar in connection with the upcoming Urs celebrations. — White Star

Punjab brings about paradigm shift in property tax regime

Capital value model to end discretionary assessments, offers reward to whistleblowers; properties valued below Rs5m exempt from tax

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: The Punjab government has officially replaced its 66-year-old property tax system with a modern Capital Value (CV) model. Effective from Jan 1, 2025, it is expected to end an era of discretionary property assessments and aims to unlock billions in previously lost revenue.

The transition follows amendments to the Punjab Urban Immoveable Property Tax Act of 1958, passed as part of the Finance Bill 2024.

According to Dawn, described as "the most significant structural reform in recent memory, designed to create a more transparent, equitable, and efficient tax regime".

It is learnt that the push for reform, led by Excise and Taxation Secretary Masood Mukhtar, gained momentum in early 2023. A briefing by leading econo-

mists revealed that Punjab, with a population of over 120 million, was generating less property tax revenue than the Indian city of Chennai having 10m population. The province's property tax-to-GDP ratio was a mere 0.05 per cent, significantly below the 0.3% average for lower and middle-income countries.

Officials told Dawn that the previous Adalat Rental Value (ARV) system was widely regarded as being susceptible to corruption. Tax inspectors had broad discretion in assessing property values, often leading to undervaluation in exchange for bribes. Valuation tables were outdated and lacked transparency, with no effective mechanisms for audits prior to scrutiny.

The ARV system had effectively become a parallel system, noted an official involved in the reform process and added, "We were not just losing revenue; we were bleeding credibility."

Officials saw a pivotal study by professors at the Lahore School of Economics demonstrated that a CV-based assessment, officially termed DC (District Collectorates), could significantly boost revenues while reducing administrative discretion. Simulation based on 20,000 properties indicated that a CV system could achieve revenue neutrality at a tax rate of just 0.075%. This would also allow for the inclusion of

nearly 500,000 properties that were previously untaxed.

"Most developed economies utilise capital value as their tax base because it is transparent, predictable, and easily audited," the study highlighted and added, "It empowers both the state and the citizen."

After receiving approval from the provincial Resource Mobilisation Committee (RMC), officials said the excise department embarked on the task of digitising the valuation of nearly 5 million properties and integrating DC valuation tables. This effort was met with considerable resistance from field staff accustomed to the old system, they added.

In order to overcome institutional resistance, the department introduced a novel incentive programme, offering cash rewards to whistleblowers and officials who expose tax evasion.

Additionally, a new assessment system was approved, empowering cities to evaluate properties and return valuations similar to the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) income tax model.

The reform officials say, also, introduces a more equitable system of exemptions.

Previously, area-based exemptions such as industrial zones were available.

Under the new policy, all properties valued below Rs5m are exempt from prop-

erty tax, regardless of their size or location. This change is intended to prevent owners of high-value properties in affluent areas from benefiting from relief meant for low-income citizens.

Since concerns were raised about potential legal challenges and public opposition, the department delayed the programme launch, a senior official told Dawn that the department opted for a partial remission strategy to mitigate the risks.

For the current year, the official said the existing taxpayers would be shielded from any tax increases, while newly included properties would be liable only 0.05% of their calculated tax in 2025.

"This phased approach is designed to ensure a smooth transition without provoking public backlash," he stated.

With the new system now in place, the official said the focus now would shift to public awareness campaigns, training for officials, and media engagement. Future plans include linking tax incentives to environmentally friendly upgrades, such as the installation of solar panels and water harvesting systems, which could potentially allow Punjab to monetise environmental gains through carbon credits.

One plan, experts say, "is more than just tax reform. It's about building a modern, transparent state. This is just the beginning."

Nominations of 26 accepted for NA-129

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Nomination papers of 26 candidates have been accepted by the returning officer (RO) for the by-election in the National Assembly's constituency NA-129, Lahore XIII.

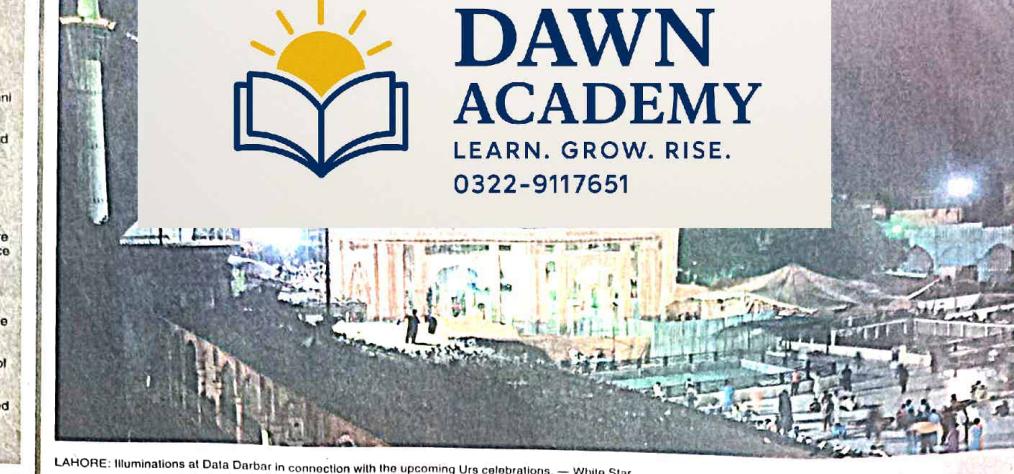
The seat fell vacant after the death of Mian Azhar, the father of Hammad Azhar of the PTI.

According to the list issued by the RO, Monday, candidates of PTI leaders Hamza, Tahir, Ishaq, Azhar and Bahaj, Khan Niaz, PML-N's Aslam Mashhood, Mehr Ishaq and Hafeez Nizam, PPP's Tahira Habib Jalib and Asif Mahmood Nizam, besides 19 others have been accepted.

Meanwhile, senior PPP leader Faisal Mir hopes that the old and ideological families of Lahore will participate in the elections of Tahira Habib, while their silence will mean the support of billions of voters.

He was addressing a press conference along with Tahira Habib, the daughter of revolutionary poet Habib Jalib, on Monday.

Hoping to win the NA-129 by-poll, Shehria called herself a labourer as she was earning her livelihood as a taxi driver and sought support from journalists and politicians in the election.



Doctor shot dead during walk in Lyari park

By Imliaz Ali

KARACHI: A doctor was shot dead in Lyari in a suspected targeted attack on Monday evening, police said.

They said that unidentified assailants riding a motorcycle intercepted Dr Shambhu Lal, 60, inside a park on the Mirza Adam Khan Road, opened fire on him and rode away.

DIG Syed Asad Raza said the doctor was on his routine walk when he was targeted.

He said the doctor sustained three bullet wounds and was rushed to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi, where he died during treatment.

The Crime Scene Unit visited the scene and collected evidence, including three spent bullet casings fired from a 9mm pistol. The casings were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for analysis, the police said.

City SSP Arif Aziz said investigators were trying to collect CCTV footage from the surrounding area.

'Monetary dispute'

DIG Raza said the killing appeared to be the result of a personal enmity.

He elaborated that initial investigation revealed the deceased doctor was involved in an over Rs6 million dispute with certain individuals.

He said that the victim had previously lodged two FIRs at the Darakhshan and Nampur police stations against three individuals.

A case has been registered on the complaint of victim's son Dr Deepak Lal against three unknown persons under Sections 302 (premeditated murder) and 34 (common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code at the Kalakot police station.

He told the police that his father had a monetary dispute with some people and he suspected their involvement in the murder.

Suspect in lawyer's murder case held in KP

KARACHI: Police have arrested a suspect from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in connection with the recent killing of senior lawyer Khawaja Shamsul Islam In Karach.

On Aug 1, Mr Islam was shot dead and his son wounded as they were leaving a mosque in the Defence Housing Authority. Darakhshan police registered a case the next day against eight nominated suspects under terrorism and murder charges.

South DIG Syed Asad Raza said on Monday that the vehicle used by the suspect to flee the scene had also been recovered. "Investigators have tracked the suspect," he said. "Evidence shows he fled alone on a motorcycle."

Police have also uncovered a bungalow in DHA allegedly used by the suspects. CCTV footage from the premises showed their activities before and after the killing.

According to DIG Razzaq, investigators have collected 30 CCTV clips related to the suspects' movements.

"With the help of human intelligence, police raided the residences of the suspects' relatives in Karachi and detained several individuals for questioning," he said.

Using hotel registration data, the suspects were traced to Hyderabad, where some of their relatives were also taken into custody. Through technological surveillance, police tracked the suspects to KP, where one was arrested, the officer explained.

—Staff Reporter



KARACHI: Workers clean the premises of the mausoleum of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah ahead of Independence Day —Online

Lawmakers condemn all forms of discrimination against minorities

House calls for using inclusive language for non-Muslims in Constitution

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly on Monday unanimously adopted a resolution to mark National Minorities Day and recommended the removal of the term "minority" from the Constitution in favour of language that reflects equality and dignity for all citizens.

The House, through the resolution tabled by Deputy Speaker Anthony Naved, condemned all forms of discrimination, intolerance, hate speech, violence and any force or undue influence in matters of faith, particularly involving minors from minority communities.

The resolution recommended the removal of the term "minority" from the Constitution and demanded replacing it with language reflecting equality and dignity of all citizens. It called upon the provincial government to ensure that any change in faith or belief

identity was made only with free, informed and voluntary consent.

The resolution demanded that the government protect worship places, sacred sites and cultural heritage in faith-based communities, and provide minimum standards of education with timely justice, security and rehabilitation.

The House urged the provincial government to reserve a five per cent quota in all educational institutions and a 10pc quota in all scholarships for students from faith-based communities, in addition to merit, at the provincial, federal and international levels.

The House also called upon the government to establish a provincial faith rights protection authority to monitor violations, provide legal aid and recommend policy reforms.

It also urged the provincial government to incorporate a dedicated lesson in the curriculum from primary education, highlighting the speech of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, with a specific focus on his vision and assurances regarding the rights and status of minorities.

Speaking on the resolution, CM Murad Ali Shah recalled the historic vision of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, calling Aug 11 a day that reminded the nation of the found-

ing father's landmark speech.

"We are gathered here in the same assembly hall where the Pakistan Resolution was first passed," said the chief minister. "On Aug 11, 1947, Quaid-i-Azam presented his vision of a free, equal and independent state where everyone was free to go to their temples, mosques, or any other place of worship and that religion or belief had no role to do with the affairs of the state," CM Shah said.

While Pakistan achieved independence in 1947, it was in 2009 that then-President Asif Ali Zardari officially declared Aug 11 as National Minorities Day, Mr Shah said, adding: "Since then we have observed it every year, just like other days before Independence Day, to reaffirm Quaid-i-Azam's vision of equality and justice for all citizens," he said.

Opposition Leader Ali Khurshid said that sectarian prejudice should be avoided, but unfortunately, nationalist prejudice also came into play here. This issue needs to take a serious look to be addressed.

Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, Deputy Speaker Anthony Naved, PPP's Agha Siraj Durran and Dr Sohrah Saraki, and MQM-P's Anil Kumar, Kiran Masood, and Taha Khan also spoke on the occasion.

Only dumpers equipped with trackers and cameras will be allowed in Karachi from 25th, PA told

- Sharjeel announces compensation for family of siblings killed in accident on Rashid Minhas Road
- Says govt will not allow anyone to destroy city's peace

KARACHI: Senior Minister Sharjeel Imam Memon on Monday informed the Sindh Assembly that only the dumpers equipped with trackers and cameras would be allowed to enter the metropolis after Aug 25.

He said this while replying to the criticism of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan's lawmaker Taha Ahmed Khan, who strongly condemned the Sunday deadly accident in which two siblings were killed by a heavy vehicle and as the rising influence of the "dumper mafia"

in Karachi.

Mr Memon, who also holds the portfolio of transport, termed the accident a tragedy beyond condemnation and said that every parent and every person with a sense of humanity would feel the pain deeply.

He said that immediately after the accident, police arrested the driver and impounded the vehicle. "However, some miscreants, who were clearly terrorist-minded and trained, reached the spot and set seven dumpers on fire. They had planned to spread fear and panic in the city and disrupt peace."

Mr Memon said that following the incident, emergency negotiations were held with transporters and dumper owners who had blocked the Superhighway in protest, and a written agreement was obtained from them on stamp paper.

"Under the agreement, only the dumpers equipped with modern trackers and cameras will be allowed to enter the city

after Aug 25, and the complete record and licence of every driver, regardless of which city they came from, will be checked," he said.

Commenting on the arson attacks following the accident, he said this was the same old method through which the politics of linguistics and extortion had been used to bring the city to a standstill that the city had achieved peace after great sacrifices and that this peace would not be allowed to be disturbed at any cost.

He termed the incident an organised conspiracy but made it clear that the government would not succumb to any pressure and would not allow anyone to distract the city's peace.

He said that if anyone attempted to spread unrest again, strict action would be taken against them in the manner of "responding to violence with violence" and the city's peace would be maintained at all costs.

Mr Memon informed the house that the chief minister had ordered immedi-

ate payment of financial compensation to the family of the siblings killed in Sunday's accident.

Earlier, Taha Ahmed, who is the deputy parliamentary party leader of the MQM-P, expressed deep concern over the dangerous operations of the dumpers, which he said, were spreading death on the streets of Karachi throughreckless driving and disregard for human life.

He demanded immediate and strict action against the perpetrators.

Referring to a statement of a transport leader, he said: "The mindset of burning Mosques is unacceptable and must be condemned in the strongest terms."

Reiterating his earlier demands, Mr Khan concluded that protecting lives, ensuring justice for victims and eradicating ethnic bias were fundamental responsibilities of any government, and that the party would continue to stand firmly against injustice in all its forms.

—By Tahir Siddiqui

Pakistan won't back down if India forces war, declares Bilawal

- PPP chief describes Modi's unilateral suspension of Indus Waters Treaty as an attack on Indus Valley civilisation
- Attends concluding session of Shah Latif Bhaiti's urs

By Mohammad Hussain Khan

HYDERABAD: Terming the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to unilaterally suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), an attack on the Indus Valley civilisation and culture, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said that Pakistan always advocates peace, but if New Delhi still forces it into war, the nation will not back down.

"If we are forced to leave from the land of Shah Latif Bhaiti, then we will send a message to the Modi government that we do not retreat, we do not bow down, and if you dare think about launching an attack on the Indus River, then the people of every province of Pakistan will be ready to come and defend our country," he said.

Mr Bhutto-Zardari was speaking at an award ceremony on the concluding day of the annual three-day urs of Shah Abdul Latif Bhaiti in Bhit Shah on Monday evening.

He recalled that after the humiliating defeat in the recent war, India attacked Pakistan's waters by unilaterally suspending the Indus Waters Treaty.



BHIT SHAH: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari lays a chadar at the grave of Shah Latif Bhaiti.—Umar Ali

'Driver who killed siblings didn't have HTV licence'

By Sumair Abdullah

KARACHI: A judicial magistrate was on Monday informed that a dumper driver booked and arrested for killing two siblings in an accident on Bunder Road, a day before he did not possess a heavy transport vehicle (HTV) licence.

The investigating officer of the case brought the suspect before Judicial Magistrate (Central) Farman Ali Tagi and sought his custody for 14 days for interrogation.

He informed the court that as per initial inquiry the suspect did not possess a licence to drive a heavy vehicle. He said only had the licence to drive light transport vehicles (LTV) and that too had expired in 2016.

The IO asked for more time to get information regarding the owner of the dumper — involved in the accident — as well as need to verify the documents of the suspect.

After hearing the IO, the court remanded him in police custody for two days and directed him to submit a progress report at the next hearing.

Body formed to probe arson attacks

A high-powered committee was formed to investigate arson attacks, where miscreants torched seven dumpers after the fatal accident.

According to an order issued by the Sindh police chief Javed Alam Odho, DIG-West Irfan Ali Baloch will head the team comprising Central SSP, Zeehan Shahid Siddiqui, West SSP Tariq Ilahi Mastoi and Investigation SSP Anam Tajammul.

'No major faults found in gates of Sukkur Barrage'

By Our Correspondent

SUKKUR: The project management office (PMO) of the Sindh Barrage Improvement Project (BISP) has declared recently installed Sukkur Barrage gates 'free of major issues'.

"Major issues are being rectified," it said in a reply to a letter from the Khairpur irrigation circle's superintendent, who had pointed some 'major' issues have surfaced in the quality and operation of the gates.

Project Director Pritam Das, in his reply said that no major technical faults were found in the recently replaced gates Nos 44 to 59. He said that the technical observations were recorded during the Site Acceptance Test (SAT) and that only minor technical issues were noted during the test.

These minor faults are being rectified by the contractor concerned, he added, adding that these faults do not affect the overall structural or operational integrity of the gates.

"All necessary steps are being taken to ensure quality compliance," said Mr Das, and explained that the gates were still under the custody of the Chinese contractor and had not yet been formally handed over to the PMO or the barrage authority.

Mr Das wrote to the SE that a joint committee comprising representatives of the contractor, concerned PMO and the barrage authority had conducted a detailed inspection and jointly identified the minor issues, which were now in the process of being resolved.

Addressing the concerns raised in the SE's letter, he said that the entire was part of standard internal procedures and quality checks which were being followed properly.

Regarding the gates installation work, he said: "There is no issue of substandard material being used. We have maintained strict adherence to quality assurance protocols at every stage of the project."

Another amendment?

THE dust from the 26th Amendment has yet to settle, but talk of a 27th one is already in the air. Given the acrimony that surrounded the last attempt to tinker with the Constitution, one wonders if it will be any different this time. Much has changed since the last amendment was forced through the legislature. The last time the Constitution was being amended, the government did not have the votes to get its bill passed. Lawmakers had to be roped in from the opposition benches to cobble together a two-thirds majority. Some came willingly, after cutting deals. Others had no choice. It did not matter. It was clear from the beginning that the law had to be passed. Even allied lawmakers did not have full knowledge of what they were voting for, and the law minister is said to have simply been handed a draft with clear instructions.

To be clear, there nothing concrete that is known about the '27th Amendment'. For now, it seems merely to be a topic of discussion within the PML-N and its coterie of legal advisers. No proposal has been shared with the party's allies, nor is there a draft that may be debated. Still, it has remained a topic of discussion ever since the government inherited a two-thirds majority courtesy of the Constitutional Bench that the 26th Amendment had helped set up. The two-thirds majority might be the main reason why the government does not seem too fussed. This time, there will not be a need to abduct, bribe or coerce opposition lawmakers. Nor will any party not already allied to the regime be able to blackmail its way into receiving concessions, or to force the government to rethink its agenda. Indeed, the amendment will be seen through without any hiccups even if the regime were to decide that it must be passed tomorrow.

It is said that the government may be seeking more 'fixes' for the judiciary. The 26th Amendment apparently did not fix it enough. But it would be deeply unfortunate if the amendment being debated is also focused heavily on a narrow agenda. Pakistan faces several deep-rooted issues that require urgent legislative intervention. These include matters like the possibility of a new province in south Punjab; the need to revisit the role and authority of caretaker governments; addressing the inability of the ECP in fulfilling its intended purpose; and the management of the growing burden of the NFC award, among many others. If the government decides to take all stakeholders on board, especially the opposition, the new amendment could become an opportunity to build bridges where the 26th sowed divisions. Now virtually unchallengeable, the regime would benefit by showing some grace. With power comes responsibility, and it must start to demonstrate some.

War on journalists

THE Gaza Strip has become a graveyard for journalists as well, with Israel intentionally murdering those who dare to report on the atrocities it is committing in the occupied Palestinian territory. On Sunday night, Zionist forces attacked a journalists' tent outside the al-Shifa Hospital, murdering at least six media persons. Five of them worked for Al Jazeera, including award-winning correspondent Anas al-Sharif. This was no accident, as al-Sharif had been a marked man due to his reporting, with Israeli officials earlier calling him out by name, accusing him of being a Hamas fighter — an allegation refuted by his employer. Meanwhile, the Committee to Protect Journalists had termed the Israeli campaign against the reporter a "real-life threat". Sadly, it is clear that Israel can literally get away with murder after calling anyone a Hamas fighter; perhaps the tens of thousands of innocent children that Tel Aviv has butchered in Gaza's wasteland were also seen as militants worthy of death by the Zionist entity.

As the CPJ has put it, "Israel is murdering the messengers". Foreign media cannot enter Gaza thanks to a blockade enforced by Israel. Hence, the brave voices that remain in this devastated Strip are targeted by Tel Aviv for doing their jobs, particularly exposing the barbarity of the Israeli regime. According to Al Jazeera, over 270 media workers have been killed in Israel's war on Gaza since October 2023, most of them Palestinians. Multiple family members of media workers have been wiped out by the Zionists, including that of Wael Dahdouh and Moamen al-Sharafi. Even before the atrocities in Gaza, Israel had no qualms about murdering Palestinian journalists, such as Shireen Abu Akleh, who was targeted in Jenin in 2022. Still, despite the immense dangers to themselves, and while dealing with the loss of family members and colleagues murdered by Israel, these brave men and women continue to discharge their professional duties. It is due to their efforts that we know of Gaza's starving children, its bombed hospitals, its maimed and bloodied citizens. Tel Aviv is exacting revenge on Palestinian journalists for telling the truth, and smearing them as militants. Will the standard-bearers of free press and expression in the West and elsewhere demand justice for Anas al-Sharif and hundreds of Palestinian media workers murdered in the line of duty? Or will the criminal silence continue?

Climate's human toll

IN Danyor, Gilgit-Baltistan, seven young men were crushed to death under a landslide in the early hours of Monday. They were not engineers or state rescue workers, but local volunteers trying to restore the town's only water supply after floods had destroyed it. Ordinary citizens were forced to shoulder the burden the government should have carried, ultimately losing their lives. Their sacrifice reminds us of both the human toll of climate change and the cost of official inaction. GB is on the front line of Pakistan's climate emergency. Melting glaciers, unpredictable rains and increasingly destructive flash floods are remaking the region's geography. Since late June, heavy downpours — followed by floods on July 21 in Babusar and the next day in Danyor — have swept away bridges, roads, crops and irrigation systems, cutting off entire valleys and leaving thousands without drinking or irrigation water.

Scientists have long warned that such events will become more frequent and intense as the planet's temperature rises. Reactive and shallow, defined more by confidence statements than proactive planning. In Danyor, repeated appeals for the restoration of the damaged water channel were met with assurances, not action. When a temporary fix made by locals was washed away, the government still did nothing. Faced with shortages, residents took the risk themselves, working in dangerous conditions — until the earth gave way. The administration arrived only after lives had been lost, with compensation cheques and promises of medical care. This pattern cannot continue. The government must invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, building effective early-warning systems, and deploying trained disaster-response teams in GB. In the immediate term, it must restore the water supply and repair damaged links before more people are exposed to danger. The people of Danyor stepped forward because the state stepped back. Their courage should not become another statistic in a long list of preventable disasters.

OPINION

BY ARIFA NOOR

Rinse and repeat

The story of displacement is hard for mainstream Pakistan to understand.

MUCH is happening in parts of KP, especially the recently merged districts that were formerly federally administered. In the past week or so, a three-day operation was announced in Bajaur but it came to an abrupt halt because of pressure from the people. Taking to the streets in large numbers, they sent a powerful message. Such was the pushback that the operation was halted. Following this, negotiations were carried on by the community police with the TTP.

Among other things, the objective was to convince the TTP to retreat from the area, so there would be no need for the operation. The negotiations carried on, even though most experts were not too hopeful. The negotiations failed, and another operation became imminent. As this piece was being written, a three-day curfew was announced for parts of the district. Social media is filled with shocking images of belongings piled onto various vehicles, people with luggage, young men holding on to the sides of a luggage-carrying van or an old woman sitting in the boot of a car. There are children too. These are images that will probably not make it to mainstream media because there is an unspoken consensus about ignoring the human costs of such decisions.

Indeed, the story of displacement is hard for mainstream Pakistan to understand, especially for the privileged.

Threatened by the spectre of terrorism reaching their streets in Islamabad and Lahore, those residing in these big cities, with regular jobs or businesses and comfortable savings, cannot understand what these displacements mean for those living in the former Fata agencies, who have already suffered this cycle. To see a safe and hospitable environment become alien and hostile, and then being displaced and having to leave homes and livelihoods behind to live in camps, and finally to return to an area where houses and markets have been damaged extensively is an experience the rest of us cannot even begin to comprehend.

The residents of many parts of KP have lived through this and now they are expected to go through it again. No wonder they are now equally wary of both sides of this conflict. This is why in the past couple of years, most political parties, including the ones that supported the post-2008 operations, have also spoken against operations that have recognised the mood on the ground. The chief minister of KP is no different; one day he criticises the lack of respect of curfews and the next he explains the importance of rooting out terrorism. The Jekyll and Hyde performance is to appease both the people and the powerful who ensure his job and government.

But with this public mood, most energies are focused on keeping the news of the sentiment from reaching the rest of the country. And there is little to no debate on the alienation of the people and whether or not there are ways of tackling terrorism without losing public support. Instead, we block the news, this is not the case. There is no operation other than intelligence-based operations, while curfews are imposed and people pack their belongings — delhi is the solutio

Indeed, since the issue first reared its head in the mid-oughties, from 'elimination' to 'no re-emergence', the only surface-level consensus allowed to be debated is that Pakistan is willing to afford to not eradicate terrorism. No one is willing to look deeper into the issue. How successful was the first effort? Very? Was there no room for improvement or change? Of course not, because what matters with what was very successful in the first place?

There are few questions or answers about how the TTP managed to escape to Afghanistan, only to return once the government in Kabul changed. Or how we will avoid a similar journey this time around. Neither do we discuss how many times we will repeat this cycle of displacement.

It appears that in parts of KP, we are back at the 'clear, hold and build' stage of COIN; a strategy that fell apart in the country

next door. But how will the 'hold and build' stages work this time around? No one knows. And how will 'clear' ensure that the TTP doesn't just escape across the border again?

This should be of great importance. Especially because, in the aftermath of the previous phases of displacement, the number of the local population increased as they returned. The check posts, the curfews, the missing people — all these issues and more continued to harass the people on their return. And it is worth remembering that these issues, in the aftermath of the post-2008 operations led to the emergence of the PTM around 2018.

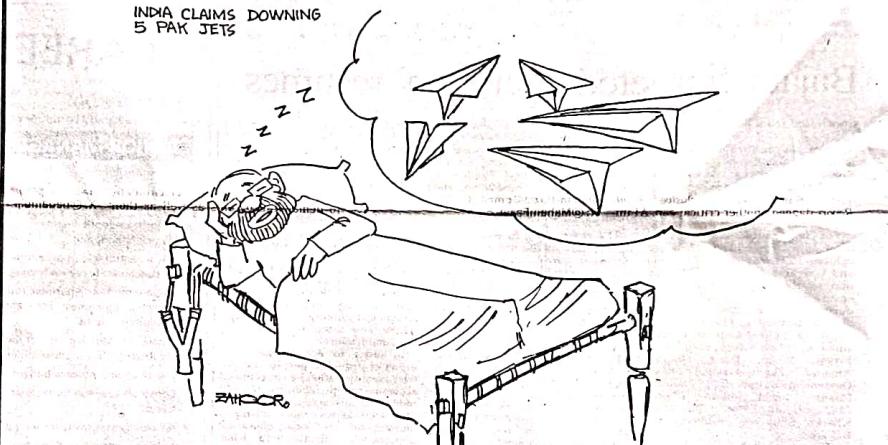
It was a movement that made those in power uncomfortable (then and now) that coverage was simply not allowed. And while the movement seems to have fizzled out since the alienation of the people is more than evident. The public gatherings in Bajaur, Madyan, or Tirah valley or even Bannu, a year ago point to the anger of the people in Bajaur and Bannu, as in Bajaur, crowds gathered spontaneously to push for peace and against conflict. But in all these cases, the crowds were seen as belligerent by the state as they were of the militants. And this is a cause for concern.

This is not all. From the street point of view, PTM to these public gatherings in recent times, the worrying trend is of people going for street protests or direct confrontation over electoral and parliamentary politics. The PTM expressed a sense of faith in parliament publicly, but recent protests have also indicated this, even if it is not being expressed as such.

Instead of acknowledging this and trying to find solutions, we are back to repeating history, with no clarity on how and why it will end differently this time around. Because accepting mistakes and learning from them is just too difficult. ■

The writer is a journalist.

INDIA CLAIMS DOWNING 5 PAK JETS



BY JAWED NAQVI

Dissolving India's worst fears

RAHUL Gandhi's chilling exposé of fraud in Indian elections offers far-reaching health benefits for Indian democracy even if it may not change the outcome of the elections. Real change would require nationwide street- and village-level mobilisation, which is a big ask for the current state of the opposition. The revelations about the election commission's involvement in preparing fraudulent electoral rolls that evidently helped the BJP win successive elections reverberating across the country.

Everyone outside India, Narendra Modi's hand-picked election commission, and the supporters of BJP is convinced that Rahul has found a treasure trove of evidence that Hindutva's rise as a fascist threat to India was about rigged elections and not mass support as many feared. Fascism rides on popular support, which Narendra Modi has done, contrary to the myth circulated by the media. In fact, of suspended electorates, Modi may remain a challenge to an autocrat, but the stories of his popularity are now shown to have been excessively cooked up. That is the evidence Rahul Gandhi and his core team of experts have found from a mountain load of polling lists they secured from a grudging and hand-picked election commission.

In one flourish, Gandhi may have helped dispel widespread fears of a religio-fascist takeover of India. Fascism is a terrifying popular phenomenon as Europe witnessed close to a century ago. Men and women — workers, capitalists, intellectuals, soldiers — and even schoolchildren were smitten by Hitler's charisma. They were not manipulated EVMs or drawn up false voters' lists. It's the autocrats that threat remains intact in India.

That the exercise came at the time of jubilations for Indian cricket, which triggered a national affirmation of its waning popularity of multi-religious and multi-cultural plurality is what this piece is about.

Cricket and cinema have had an influence beyond the ordinary on politics in India. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh venerated their movie actors and scriptwriters who doubled as political leaders and denoted the centre of power and governance in the southern states. Bollywood has produced many MPs, elected and

ominated. Of course, cricketers like Chetan Chauhan, Kirti Azad and Mohammed Azharuddin have also been members of the Lok Sabha by popular vote, for this or that party.

It was not that Mohammad Siraj, India's new bowling sensation at the Oval, the young classy batsman and skipper of India's cricket squad did something unknowingly together with their teammates at the end of the Test series in England that no one has done for the country before them. They reaffirmed faith not just in India's cricketing prowess, which has gained

India's cricketing prowess, which has gained

international recognition.

When the Sikhs farmers were protesting their stolen rights, Sikhs were dubbed terrorists by Modi's loyal media. When the 2024 elections came in full swing, Modi described Muslims as thuggish, Hindu women's mangalsutra and their cattle. The cricket team would have none of that as they embraced and delighted in the glorious game as one team.

The duo captured the love of a billion-plus compatriots at a time when Rahul Gandhi had put his political career at stake and, many say, his life on the line to dissolve the worst fears Indians were confronted with in recent years — the fear of religious fascism supplanting democracy.

Modi changed the law recently about the nomination of the election commissioner. The PM, the leader of the opposition and the chief justice of India would select the chief election commissioner. He has done away with the chief justice in the process and appointed his home minister in the judge's place. It gives him two-thirds control of the selection.

Gandhi's questions to the election commission have not elicited a mea culpa. Instead, the poll body has embarked on a drive to delete hundreds of thousands of legitimate names from the voter list in Bihar, of those bearing officially recognised ID cards.

TV journalist Karan Thapar highlighted the dangers inherent in the special intensive review (SIR) of the electoral rolls that recently underway in Bihar. The election commission has increased the draft rolls confirming that 6.55 million names have been deleted, nearly nine per cent of those who lived there before the exercise began. "This is already disturbing," wrote Thapar.

Given Bihar's high fertility rate, it's odd that the total number of registered voters should fall rather than increase in 2025, says Thapar. That's not to proof should one be needed, that Hindutva has failed to conquer the imagination of Indians, and it needs to rig elections. ■

The writer is Dawn's correspondent in Delhi.
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Jakarta, Islamabad set to revive sister city agreement

ISLAMABAD: To strengthen the longstanding brotherhood, Islamabad is set to deepen its relationship with Jakarta by naming roads and installing reciprocal monuments in each other's capital cities.

This initiative aims to renew the sister city agreement signed between the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Jakarta in 1984.

According to sources, the federal government has directed the CDA to fully implement this agreement and submit proposals on how the collaboration with Jakarta can be revitalised through meaningful and symbiotic exchanges. These measures are expected to include naming roads in Islamabad and Jakarta after prominent personalities from each other's countries, as well as erecting reciprocal monuments.

A source familiar with the proposal said, "The federal government wants to carry out a series of coordinated activities with Jakarta's administration, including symbolic gestures such as mutual road naming and monuments."

The CDA has been asked to prepare and share detailed plans in line with these directions.

It is pertinent to note that Islamabad already has several roads named after foreign dignitaries, while many countries have streets named after notable Pakistani leaders. For instance, Iran Avenue in Islamabad was inaugurated last year by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and then-President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi during his visit. In February this year, an interchange in the F-8 sector was named after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during his state visit.

Other prominent roads in Islamabad include Faisal Avenue, named after the late Saudi King Shah Faisal; Arsalan Avenue, honouring the Turkish nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, as well as roads named after Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and others.

Several parks in the capital, such as Argentina Park, Ankara Park, and Japanese Park, also reflect Islamabad's tradition of commemorating friendly nations. The city's main mosque, Faisal Mosque, named after King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, stands as a prominent symbol of Pakistan's ties with the Muslim world. Designated architect Vedat Dalokay, the mosque's foundation was laid in 1976 and completed in 1988 following King Faisal Abdul Aziz's visit to Islamabad in 1966. — Staff Reporter

More PTI activists booked

ISLAMABAD: The capital police registered another case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf activists and workers under different charges.

The case was registered at the Shahzad Town police station under sections 395, 353, 188, 148, 149, 109 and 188 of Pakistan Penal Code and section 8 of Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act 2004. According to the FIR, the SHO got information from an informer that PTI workers were holding a conference in connection with the sit-in on August 14 at Chatha Bakhtawar, within the N-10 area.

In response, a 13-member police team in anti-riot gears along with nine members of Quick Response Force reached the locality and spotted 35 to 45 persons armed with batons and holding PTI's banners attending the conference.

They were delivering anti-Pakistan speeches and chanted anti-government slogans, the FIR said. They put up resistance after seeing the police and attacked them, besides, intervened in the affair. They also snatched anti-war batons, helmets, and anti-government flags from four policemen. They also tore uniform of two policemen. The police arrested 13 persons, while the rest managed to escape from the spot. Besides, batons and PTI's banners were also recovered from them. The police also seized and impounded 16 motorcycles of the participants of the conference. — Munawar Azeem

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Protests erupt against razing of mosque in Islamabad

Protesters to take final decision after meeting with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi

By Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD: Various religious groups joined hands on Monday to protest against the demolition of a mosque in the capital.

The Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) along with other groups held a protest test at the site of the demolished Madni mosque near Rawal Dam Chowk. The protesters also uprooted the saplings planted by the CDA on the place. The mosque had been demolished late Saturday night.

The JUI-F Member of National Assembly, Naeema Kishtwar, also submitted a resolution condemning the

demolition of Madni mosque.

Addressing the protesters, JUI-F Islamabad chief Emir Mufti Owais Ahsan announced that legal proceedings would be initiated against the demolition of the mosque.

He said the government was planning to raz 50 mosques in Islamabad and vowed to resist the move.

Interior said the religious groups have unsuccessfully tried to get an FIR registered against Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and other officials under blasphemy laws.

"If the police refuse to register the case, we will consider them enemies of Islam," said Mufti Owais Aziz said, adding that names of mosques overnight was an act of hostility against Islam.

He further said the Frontier Corps was illegally occupying greenbelts along Embassy Road and Margalla Road.

"While the mosques are being demolished in the name of beautification, no action was taken against the

illegal occupation by FC on these prime roads," he questioned.

As tension flared, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, along with commissioner Islamabad, inspector general of Islamabad police and depute commissioner held negotiations on Sunday night with a delegation of clerics led by Maulana Abdul Ghafour Haideri.

The delegation also included the leader of the Islamabad chapter of the proscribed Sipahi-i-Sahaba Pakistan.

The statement issued by the JUI-F said it had agreed that further progress would require 48 hours, and a final decision would be made after meeting with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

Amid threats of violent protests by the clerics, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry said spreading baseless rumours about madrasas and mosques was incorrect.

In a statement, he said the madras-

as located on Muree Road was relocated with the consent of its administration.

"A modern-style facility has been constructed on the new site at a cost of Rs 40 million, which provided high-quality accommodation, meals and religious education to around 200 students," the minister said in a statement.

He emphasised that any relocation of madressas or mosques situated on greenbelts or unauthorised land would only be carried out in consultation with religious scholars and the administration.

Meanwhile, fire hand cleric Maulana Abdul Aziz has issued a call for jihad and announced the launch of a civil disobedience movement against the government in response to the demolition of the mosque.

A video statement released by the Maulana showed him sitting inside Lal Masjid with a gun in his lap, hurling threats at the government.

Man kills father, two sisters; infant nephew in critical condition

By Mohammad Asghar & Munawar Azeem

I S L A M A B A D / RAWALPINDI: A property dispute turned deadly on Monday when a man allegedly killed his father and two sisters and injured his infant nephew in separate attacks at their homes in Faisalabad and Rawalpindi.

According to preliminary details provided by the police, the suspect, Mohammad Aziz, 25, first went to his father's house in the Irfanabad locality of Tramri in Islamabad, where an argument broke out. He allegedly stabbed his father, Mian Hussain, 65, a retired inspector of intelligence agency multiple times before slitting his throat. He then attacked his sister, Shabnam Zahra, 36, in the same manner, also killing her son, Salar.

Police said the suspect then proceeded to his other sister's home on Adala Road in Rawalpindi, where he allegedly murdered her. She was

identified as Anjum Zahra, 35, an employee of the same intelligence agency in which her father had worked.

Her husband was out for work when the suspect entered her house in the Saddar Beronto area and murdered her. He also slit the throat of her three-month-old son, Salar.

The victim's bodies were shifted to hospital for legal formalities by the police, while the injured child was admitted to District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ)

in critical condition. Police said the suspect is an employee of a private company in Islamabad.

Senior Superintendent of Police Rawalpindi Razzaq Tanveer Supra and other officials visited the scene of the murder soon after the incident and took the suspect into custody.

Later, the investigating officer revealed that he had killed his father, sister in Islamabad before coming to her other sister's house to kill her.

Police said the suspect had repeatedly asked his parents to arrange his marriage, but they refused. He had also requested his parents to transfer ownership of their house in Islamabad to him, but his father declined.

In a separate incident, a security guard was killed after being run over by a tractor-trolley at Chotra, Rawalpindi. Police said the victim, Zain, a resident of Chotra, Chak Khan, was on duty at a private housing society when the accident occurred.

Experts discuss climate change threat to water resources

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: Facing mounting threats from climate change to Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) water security, the region's Environment Protection Agency (EPA) on Monday convened a high-level consultative meeting under the mandate of the

newly formed Task Force on the Impacts of Climate Change on Water Resources.

The session brought together national and state-level specialists in hydrology, land management, environment, and environmental sciences from government, academia, and the private sector.

Experts warned that AJK's geographic location made it especially vulnerable to shrinking glacial cover, vanishing springs, declining groundwater tables, and the rapid depletion of inland water

sources. In several highland areas, the disappearance of springs has given way to rare instances of migration in the plains and hilly terrains, they noted.

Unregulated groundwater extraction through boreholes was another major concern.

EPA Director Shafiq Abbasi claimed that over the past decade, rising temperatures and declining rainfall had already created severe shortages in mountainous regions, while the loss of glacial reserves

pose solutions.

Identified rainwater harvesting as a promising short to medium-term measure and suggested groundwater potential should be the starting point for evidence-based planning.

EPA Director Shafiq Abbasi claimed that over the past decade, rising temperatures and declining rainfall had already created severe shortages in mountainous regions, while the loss of glacial reserves

undermining robust data collection, and continuous monitoring of aquifer health.

Chairing the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary (General) Midhat Shehzad praised the EPA's efforts and urged the development of a practical results-oriented roadmap.

"Our priority is to protect water sources, preserve forests, and promote environmentally friendly practices," she said. "We must value the blessing of rainwater and ensure it is harnessed wisely."

Party launched to fulfill Shahbaz Bhatti's mission

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Shahbaz Bhatti Workers Movement Pakistan has been officially announced along with its 13-point manifesto to carry forward the mission of former federal minister for minority affairs late Shahbaz Bhatti.

Christian leader Basharat Khokhar will serve as the party's Chairman, Nadeem Matto has been appointed Vice-Chairman, Daud Bhatti will serve as Secretary General, and Joshua William has been named Finance Secretary.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad via telephone from France, Chairman Basharat Khokhar said the party's formation on the occasion of Minorities Day symbolised the commitment of minorities to play a role in Pakistan's progress and development.

He said that the party aimed to promote interfaith harmony and fight for the rights of all marginalised segments of society, in line with the vision of Pakistan's founder Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the mission of the late leader Shahbaz Bhatti.

Key points of the 13-point manifesto include collaborating with national institutions for Pakistan's development, prosperity, stability, and democracy.

Taking practical steps to prevent the misuse of religion-based laws and uniting, organising, and mobilising scattered political and social organisations of minorities.



EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION TO PAKISTAN VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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Deadline for submission of application is 31st August 2025.

Bangladesh court hears graft case against Hasina

DHAKA: A court in Bangladesh on Monday heard cases brought by the anti-corruption organisation against ex-leader Sheikh Hasina and her family, including her daughter who has served as a top UN official.

Three officials from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) read out testimonies in three separate cases over alleged land grab of lucrative plots in a suburb of the capital Dhaka.

Hasina, 77, fled Bangladesh by helicopter on Aug. 5, 2024, after weeks of student-led protests against her autocratic rule.

She has defied orders to return from India, including to attend her separate and ongoing trial on charges amounting to crimes against humanity, over the deadly crackdown on the uprising.

Hasina has been indicted in six corruption cases, along with her US-based son Saieeb Wazed Joy, and her daughter Saima Wazed, who has been serving as the World Health Organisation's Southeast Asia chief in New Delhi.

"I found guilty," Sheikh Hasina, her son Saieeb Wazed Joy, and Saima Wazed could face up to 14 years in prison if convicted, Khan Mofizur Rehman, a lawyer said. Wazed is on leave from the WHO and a new official has taken up a post as "officer-in-charge". In total, six cases have been filed of alleged corruption connected to Hasina.

Among those named in other cases, some slated to be heard later in August, are Hasina's sister, Sheikh Rehana, and her children — including British lawmaker Taslima Siddiqi.

Taslima Siddiqi resigned as the UK government's anti-corruption minister in January, denying any wrongdoing after being named in multiple probes in Bangladesh. Siddiqi's lawyers have said the allegations against her are false.—AFP

Scientist's remains found on Antarctic glacier 66 years on

LONDON: The remains of a British meteorologist who died in an Antarctic expedition in 1959 have been recovered six decades later from a glacier, the British Antarctic Survey said on Monday.

They were identified by DNA testing as those of Dennis "Tink" Bell, who died aged 25 when he was working for the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey, which became the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), the UK's polar research institute. Bell died on Admiralty Bay, King George Island, located 120 kilometres (75 miles) off the coast of Antarctica on July 26, 1959. He was stationed on the island for a two-year assignment at a small UK research base.

Bell and three other men had set out to climb and survey a glacier, when he fell through a crevasse — a deep chasm in the ice. His body was never recovered.

The remains, which were expected to be in a glacier, were found on January 19 by a team from the Henryk Arctowski Polish Antarctic Station.

"This discovery brings closure to a decades-long mystery and reminds us of the human stories embedded in the history of Antarctic science," said BAS director Jane Francis.

The bone fragments were carried to the Falkland Islands by the BAS Royal Research Ship Sir David Attenborough, and then brought to London for DNA testing.—AFP



ACTIVISTS protest against the Trump administration's takeover of Washington — AFP

Trump places capital's police under federal control

US president wants to roll out the policy to other cities, spotlighting New York and Chicago

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump on Friday deployed military and federal police to Washington to curb violent crime in Washington, which seeks to make good on his campaign pledge to be a "law and order" president.

The Republican leader said he would place the city's Metropolitan Police under federal government control and also sending the National Guard onto the streets of the US capital.

The overwhelming Democratic city faces allegations from Republican politicians that it is overrun by crime, plagued by homelessness and financially mismanaged — although violent offenses are down.

"This is Liberation Day in DC, and we're going to take our city back," Trump said.

Trump, a convicted felon who granted blanket clemency to nearly 1,600 people involved in the 2021 US Capitol riot in Washington — has complained that local police and prosecutors aren't tough enough. He said 800 DC National Guardsmen — "and much more if necessary" —

would be deployed to the city of 700,000. As Trump was speaking at the White House, several dozen demonstrators marched outside.

"There is absolutely no need for the National Guard here," said 62-year-old retired Elizabeth Critchley, who brandished a sign with the slogan "DC says freedom not fascism". "It's all for show. It's just a big theater," she said.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who was Trump's national cabinet officials flanking Trump, said "other specialised" National Guard units could also be deployed. "They will be strong, they will be tough, and they will stand with their law enforcement partners," he said.

The new approach follows Trump's immigration policies that have sparked protests around the southern border amid mass deportations while deploying active-duty troops against protesters in Los Angeles. New York, Chicago next?

The president told reporters he planned to roll out the policy to other cities, spotlighting New York and Chicago. Unlike the 50 states, Washington operates under a unique relationship with the federal government that limits its autonomy and grants Congress extraordinary control over local matters.

Since the mid-1970s, the Home Rule Act has allowed residents to

elect a mayor and a city council, although Congress still controls the city's budget. Data from Washington police show significant drops in violent crime between 2023 and 2024, although that was coming off the back of a post-pandemic surge.

Trump posted on social media ahead of the news conference that he also wanted to target homeless encampments, after signing an executive order last month making it easier to arrest homeless people. He promised individuals "places to stay" but "FAR FROM the Capital." Trump said criminals would be jailed and that it would all happen "very fast." Federal law enforcement have already increased their presence after a former paramilitary leader, Government Efficiency staffer was beaten during an attempted carjacking.

"Last week my administration surged 500 federal agents into the district including from the FBI, ATF, DEA, Park Police, the US Marshals Service, the Secret Service, and the Department of Homeland Security," Trump said. "You know a lot of people they don't have anywhere like that. They made dozens of arrests." A Gallup poll in October found that 64 per cent of Americans believed crime had risen in 2024, although FBI data shows the lowest levels of violent crime nationwide in more than half a century.—AFP

Colombia presidential hopeful dies after June rally shooting

BOGOTA: Colombian presidential candidate Miguel Uribe has died 10 months after being shot in a rally, his family said on Monday, as the attack rekindled fears of a return to the nation's violent past.

The 19-year-old conservative senator, a grandson of former president Juan Manuel Santos, was shot in the head and leg on June 7, at a rally in the capital Bogota. Despite signs of progress in recent weeks, his doctors on Saturday announced he had suffered a new brain hemorrhage.

"Rest in peace, love of my life," his wife, Maria Claudia Tarazona, wrote on Monday morning in a post on Instagram. "Thank you for a life full of love." Authorities have arrested 15 people in connection with the attack, including the alleged shooter, a 15-year-old boy captured at the scene by Uribe's bodyguards.

Following a nationwide manhunt, police announced the arrest of an alleged member of the gang behind the attack, Elder Jose Areiza Hernandez, alias "El Costeno." Police have also pointed to a dissident group of the defunct FARC guerrilla group as being behind the assassination.

The attack on Uribe, a leading candidate ahead of the 2026 presidential election, has reopened old wounds in a country wracked by violence. His own mother, journalist Diana Turbay, was killed in a botched kidnapping plot organized to free her son from cocaine kingpin Pablo Escobar's Medellin cartel.

Four presidential candidates were assassinated during the worst phase of violence in the 1980s and 1990s under Escobar, who terrorist chief of Bogota, Medellin and elsewhere with a campaign of bombings.

"Evil destroys everything"

"Today is a sad day for the country," Colombian Vice President Fransa Marquez said on social

media. "Violence cannot continue to mark our democracy. Democracy is not built with bullets or blood; it is built with respect, with dialogue." Uribe has been a strong critic of Colombia's first elected president, Gustavo Petro, who has proposed with the country's various remaining armed groups.

He announced in October that he would seek to succeed the term-limited Petro in the May 2026 presidential election. Uribe was elected to Bogota's city council at age 26, later becoming its youngest ever chairperson and then the mayor's right-hand man.

In 2019, he unsuccessfully ran for mayor of Bogota, but three years



MIGUEL Uribe

later, he was elected a senator — receiving the most votes of any candidate in the country.

He took a seat with the conservative Democratic Center party, founded by former president Alvaro Uribe's relation, "Evil destroys everything," former president Uribe wrote on X.

In recent months, Petro, a former leftist guerrilla, has been accused of scaling up the political temperature by labelling his right-wing opponents "Nazis." US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a frequent critic of the leftist Petro government, demanded justice following the announcement of Uribe's death.—AFP

Climate heat extremes driving tropical bird decline: study

PARIS: Tropical bird populations have plummeted not only due to deforestation but also extreme heat, attributable to climate change, according to a study published on Monday in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*.

"Intensifying temperatures caused a 25-38 per cent reduction in tropical bird populations between 1950 and 2020, compared to a scenario without manmade global warming, scientists based in Europe and Australia reported. 'The findings are pretty stark,'" lead author Maximilian Kotz, researcher at the National Supercomputing

Centre in Barcelona and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), said.

Birds in the tropics now face

30 days of extreme heat per year compared to three per year in the mid-20th century, he noted.

"This has major consequences for how we think about biodiversity conservation," Kotz said by email.

"Protecting pristine habitats is crucial, but without dealing with climate change, it won't be enough," he said.

Nearly half of all bird species

are found in biodiversity-rich tropical regions. These often colourfull animals perform essential ser-

vices for ecosystems, such as dispersing plant seeds.

Invasive species another threat

But birds living in these regions may already be "close to the limits" of their tolerance to high temperatures, which can cause heatstroke (hyperthermia) or dehydration.

The overview study does not provide figures for individual species, but ear

lier this year, nature is rich with examples of the devastating impact of rising temperatures.

One documented the heat-related decline of birds in Panama, includ

ing the king quetzal, the red-crested

quetzal, the two-coloured kingfisher and the scarlet tanager.

Another study published in 2017 showed how some tropical hummingbirds are now forced to seek shade to regulate their temperature in extreme heat, cutting into the amount of time they can spend searching for life-sustaining nectar.

Extreme weather events, becoming more frequent, represent a far greater threat than increases in average temperatures or rainfall, another result of human-induced climate change. Up to now, it has been assumed that the decline in bird populations worldwide was due mainly to

other well-identified factors, especially habitat loss, pesticide use, hunting, and invasive species, especially snakes that snack on bird eggs and mosquitoes carrying avian malaria.

But the new findings challenge the view that direct human pressures have so far been the dominant driver of declines on bird populations compared to climate change in tropical regions," according to the authors.

To reach this conclusion, they analysed observational data from more than 3,000 bird populations around the world and used statistical modeling to isolate the effects of extreme weather from other factors. The find-

ings help complete the picture of tropical bird decline, noted Almee Van Tatenhove, a post-doctoral fellow at Cornell University's Center for Avian Population Studies who was not involved in the study.

"Deforestation has an obvious impact on tree cover and habitat is lost," he said. "We need long-term datasets like the authors used to understand how extreme temperatures impact avian populations." This study is an important reminder that we need to continue examining different causes of population declines and apply those findings to conservation initiatives," she continued.—AFP



MILWAUKEE (Wisconsin, US): A drone view shows partially submerged vehicles on a flooded road in this screen grab obtained from a social media video.—Reuters

NEWSMAKERS



China's Gen Z women embrace centuries-old script

JIANGYONG: At a studio in central China's Hunan province, a teacher grips an ink brush, gently writing characters of a secret script created by women centuries ago and now being embraced by a new generation.

Nushu, meaning "women's script," emerged around 400 years ago. Barred from attending school, the women secretly learned Chinese characters and adapted them into Nushu, using the script to communicate with each other through letters, song and embroidery.

Passed down through generations of women in the remote and idyllic village of Jiangyong, it is now gaining popularity nationwide among young women who view it as a symbol of strength.

Silvana Pan Shengwen said Nushu offered a safe way for women to communicate with each other. "It essentially

creates a sanctuary for us," the 21-year-old said.

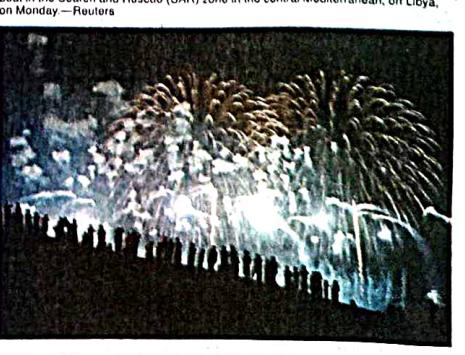
"We can express our thoughts, confide in our sisters and talk about anything," Compared to traditional Chinese calligraphy, Nushu is less busy, more slender and shaped like willow leaves. "When writing your breathing must be calm, and only then can your brush be steady," Pan said.

On Instagram-like Xiaohongshu, the hashtag "Nushu" has been viewed over 73.5 million times — mostly featuring young women sharing tattoos and other modern work incorporating the old script.

Student He Jingying said she had been enrolled in a Nushu class by her mother and that writing it brought her "a deep sense of calm". "It feels like when the brush touches the paper, a kind of strength flows into you."—AFP



CREW of the migrant search and rescue ship Sea Watch, operated by the German NGO Sea Watch, carry out a rescue operation for migrants aboard an overcrowded boat in the Search and Rescue (SAR) zone in the central Mediterranean, off Libya, on Monday — Reuters



PEOPLE watch fireworks at the Shapotou Fireworks Festival in the desert at Shapotou, in China's northern Ningxia region. Organisers invited teams from the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada and Portugal to put on displays at the festival.—AFP



MEDELLIN (Colombia): Farmers carry flower arrangements known as "silleteros" during the traditional Silleteros parade held as part of the Flower Festival on Sunday.—AFP

Iranian envoy meets Iraqi officials before Lebanon visit

Top security official discusses developments regarding conflict with the United States and Israel

TEHRAN: Ali Larijani, the head of Iran's top security body, met with senior officials in Iraq on Monday, ahead of a visit to Lebanon this week to goad government plans to disarm Hezbollah-backed group Houlellah.

Israel, briefly joined by the United States, struck Iranian nuclear facilities, while Israel has also attacked Hamas and Hezbollah since late 2023 — both part of Tehran's anti-Israel "axis of resistance".

Iranian state television said Larijani, the head of the National Security Council, had departed on a three-day trip, his first since being appointed to the visit to Bagdad, where he was due to discuss in Iraq over a proposed law that would further formalise the role and, possibly, the autonomy of a powerful coalition of pro-Iran former paramilitaries.

Iranian state television said Larijani signed a "joint security memorandum of understanding" with Iraq's National Assembly speaker Ali Salih al-Sudani. A statement from Al-Sudani's office said the officials discussed the implementation of the bilateral agreement, as well as the Israel-Hamas conflict in the Gaza Strip.

The office of Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shiai al-Sudani said in a statement that he oversaw the signing of the "joint security memorandum of understanding".

The details of the security deal have not been made public. A top Iraqi government official said the aim of Larijani's visit was to discuss the agreement and inform Iraq "about Iran's position on the latest developments regarding the conflict with the United States and Israel".

While in Iraq, the Iranian security chief also met President Abdul Latif Rashid as well as Sudan, Tehran's official Xinhua news agency reported. Larijani later met Iraq's top diplomat Fuad Hussein and parliament speaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, according to posts on X.

Hezbollah disarmament

Larijani's planned trip to Lebanon comes after Tehran expressed strong opposition to a US-led plan to disarm Hezbollah, which it condemned as "Beirut and the region's most unacceptable interference".

Larijani told state TV before departing that "our cooperation with the Lebanese government is still long and deep", and that "Lebanon's independence is still important to us and we will contribute to it." On Monday, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Larijani's tour "aims to contribute to the maintenance of peace in the Middle East".

Baqaei said Iran received Lebanon's "right to defend itself and to resist the aggression of Zionism and Israel," which would be "impossible without military capabilities and weapons". Before its war with Israel, Hezbollah was believed to be fully armed than the Hezbollah military. It built its popularity, in part, on resistance to Israel, which occupied southern Lebanon for nearly two decades (1978-2000).

Now weakened, Hezbollah's military power has slipped. The Iranian government, backed by its allies in Lebanon, has moved to further restrain it.

On Saturday, Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to Iran's supreme leader, described the plan to disarm Hezbollah as compliance "to the will of the United States and Israel". —AFP



DIWANIYAH: Pilgrims march from central Iraq towards Karbala ahead of commemorations of Arbaeen, which marks the 40th day after Ashura.—AFP

Iran sees Armenia corridor as 'part of US ploy'

Yerevan, Baku publish text of Trump-brokered peace deal

Pezeshkian said Iran "welcomes" a new agreement that strengthens "cooperation among its neighbours", but emphasised the need to prevent the "interference of any military or security force" in implementing the corridor project, according to the statement from his office.

Armenia's deputy foreign minister said on Tuesday that the US had "taken a stand on the issue". Tehran has said on Saturday, a senior advisor to Iran's supreme leader said Tehran will not allow the creation of the planned corridor, warning that the area would become "a graveyard for Trump's mercenaries".

Text of deal

Armenia and Azerbaijan published the text of a US-brokered peace agreement on Monday, pledging to respect each other's territorial integrity and formally putting an end to nearly four decades of conflict.

The deal was struck in Washington on Friday, when Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met President Donald Trump at the White House.

The text of the agreement, which was initially issued by the countries' foreign ministers, says Yerevan and Baku will relinquish all claims to each other's territory, refrain from using force against one another and pledge to respect international law.

"This agreement is a solid foundation for establishing a reliable and lasting peace, the result of an

agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan that reflects the balance of interests of the two countries," Pashinyan wrote on Facebook.

Armenia and Azerbaijan, neighbours in the South Caucasus region, have been locked in conflict since the late 1980s over Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous region at the southern end of the Karabakh mountain range, within Azerbaijan. Baku took back full control of the region in 2023, prompting almost all of the territory's 100,000 ethnic Armenians to flee.

The European Union, NATO member Turkey and Russia have welcomed the accord, although Moscow, a traditional broker and ally of Armenia, was also warned against foreign mediation.

The deal ends a battle for the deployment of third-party forces along the countries' shared border, a possible reference to Russia, which has previously deployed peacekeepers to the region and still has extensive military assets in Armenia.

The European Union also has a mission deployed at the border to monitor ceasefire violations, which Baku has repeatedly demanded it withdraw.

The peace deal has not yet been signed by both independent states from the Soviet Union in 1991. In a major hurdle to peace, Azerbaijan is demanding that Armenia change its constitution, which Baku says makes an implicit claim on

Azerbaijani territory. —Agencies

China rams own warship while chasing Philippine vessel

MANILA: A Chinese navy vessel collided with one from its own coast guard while chasing a Philippine patrol boat in the South China Sea on Monday, Manila said, releasing dramatic video footage of the confrontation.

Tarriela said the Chinese crew "never responded" to the ship's offer of assistance. A Chinese coast guard spokesman confirmed that a confrontation had taken place without mentioning the collision.

Videos released by Manila showed a China Coast Guard ship and a Chinese navy vessel bearing the number 164 on its hull colliding with a loud crash. Additional footage and photos released later by the Philippine Coast Guard showed the stricken Chinese vessel still afloat but with its entire bow crumpled inward.

"The (China Coast Guard vessel) CGC 3104, which was chasing the (Philippine coast guard vessel) BRP Sulu at high speed, performed a risky manoeuvre from the (Philippine) vessel's starboard quarter, leading to the impact with the PLA (People's Liberation Army) Navy warship," Tarriela said in a statement.

Monday's incident is the latest in a series of confrontations between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost entirely despite an international ruling that the assertion has no legal basis.

More than 60 per cent of global maritime trade passes through the disputed waterway.

Speaking at a morning news conference, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos said the country's patrol vessels were "on the front line" in the area to defend, as well as exercise Manila's sovereign rights over what it considers to be part of its territory. —AFP

'India Day' celebrations delayed in Ireland over 'racist' attacks

ONDON: One of Ireland's largest celebrations of Indian culture was postponed following "violent attacks" on the community in recent months, the Ireland India Council which promotes ties between the countries announced on Monday.

"We feel that the situation at the moment for holding India Day is not conducive," the cultural and trade association's co-chairman Prashant Shukla told reporters after a meeting with Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister Simon Harris.

The celebrations, scheduled for Sunday, have been organised by the council in collaboration with the Irish government since 2015 to feature various cultural performances. Shukla said the decision to postpone the event was "very difficult" but was taken for the "safety" of the community.

"I completely condemn the despicable acts of violence and racism that have taken place against some members of the community in recent weeks," Harris said in an X post.

PTI top brass convicted in two more May 9 cases

Continued from Page 1

Suleman Ahmad, Abdul Qadir, Majid Ali, and Bhaktawaran.

Arson case

Similarly, Omair Cheema, Yasmin Rasheed, Moinuddin Rasheed, and Ejaz Chaudhry were awarded ten-year rigorous imprisonment in a case concerning the burning of police vehicles near the Lahore corps commander's residence. Hafiz Muhammad Arshad, Bilal Bashir, Muhammad Qasim, Ayesha Ali Bhutta, Zainul Hassan, and Aslam Waseem were also convicted by the judge.

The judge acquitted seven accused, including Ajmed Khan, Abrar Ahmad, Faisel Moinuddin, Muhammad Jamil, Sadia Nasir and Tasneem Akhtar, besides Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

It may be noted that among the PTI

top brass, Mr Qureshi has been acquitted in three May 9 cases being heard in Lahore, whereas Dr Yousaf, Mr Cheema, Mr Arshad, and Mr Rasheed have been convicted in all three.

On July 22, a Lahore ATC acquitted Shah Mehmood Qureshi in a May 9 case related to the Sherman Bridge, but convicted the rest of the senior leadership named in the FIR. The court had concluded that the convicts conspired to commit arson and were present at the site of the violence.

'Braxen affront to justice'

The PTI denounced the punishment meted out to its senior leadership, calling it a "braxen affront to justice and the rule of law". Talking to Dawn, party leader Asad Qaiser termed the decision a "murder of justice", alleging that it was a decision of the executive

announced by the court.

"It was the decision of the executive but announced by the court," Mr Qaiser alleged, saying they would challenge the verdicts in superior courts.

Mr Qaiser, who held a protest in Islamabad with other parliamentarians against the rulings, said the party would demand a habeas corpus on Aug 14 to demand "Haqqeeq Azadi" (true freedom).

"We will demand that there should be a rule of law as per the directions of Quaid-e-Azam," he said.

In a separate statement, PTI Central Information Secretary Shahid Waqas Akram said the party categorically rejected this decision and reaffirmed that it was "against legal, public and political struggle at every forum until justice was served. He said the verdicts were delivered "purely on the basis of political vendetta, disregarding all legal principles

and the requirements of a fair trial".

Mr Akram alleged that the verdicts were unfairly conducted to serve a specific result. "It is deeply regrettable that the court was entirely disengaged in these cases, with the accused denied even the basic right to present their defence," he said, claiming that proceedings were held late at night and behind closed doors.

He claimed that a series of verdicts followed by the court with the goal of crushing the PTI and intimidating its members. The PTI spokesperson vowed that the party would not be discouraged by the rulings. "These decisions will never deter us from our struggle for democratic rights, constitutional supremacy, and the rule of law," he said, affirming that PTI would "challenge every verdict in the high courts and the Supreme Court."

Pakistan flays Indian bid to 'distort' army chief's speech

Continued from Page 1 under full civilian control" and is to always encourage discipline and restraint, while dealing with the issues of such import.

Rebutting Indian claims, Foreign Office Spokesperson Amna Shafiqat Ali Khan said, "Pakistan strongly rejects the immature remarks made by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs earlier today, which yet another demonstration of their chronic tendency to distort facts and twist statements out of context."

He described the "nuclear blackmail" charge as a misleading "self-serving construct" that did not reflect the reality of Pakistan's nuclear policy. "Pakistan remains firmly opposed to the use or threat of use of force," he maintained.

The MEA further alleged that external influence could compromise Islamabad's decision-making. Responding to those insinuations, the Foreign spokesperson said, "Pakistan's sustained and credible counterterrorism efforts are internationally acknowledged. Our security forces remain the bulwark against terrorism. The Indian claims of MEA's spurious insinuations and without a shred of evidence."

Amb Khan emphasised that Pakistan is "a responsible nuclear weapon state with an elaborate command and control structure

Iraq announces nationwide power outage amid 'record' heat

BAGHDAD: Power was cut across Iraq on Monday as scorching summer temperatures pushed electricity grid demand to unprecedented levels, authorities said.

The outage came amid a heatwave that Iraq's meteorological service expects to last more than a week, with temperatures climbing as high as 50C in parts of the country.

Mitigating the grid interruption was the fact that most houses holds rely on private generators, acquired to combat power cuts.

The electricity ministry said the grid suffered a "total outage" after two transmission lines were shut down "due to a record rise in temperatures, increased consumer demand, and increased electrical load on the provinces of Anbar and Karbala, which are experiencing an influx of millions of pilgrims" for a major religious commemoration.

The shutdown caused a sudden and accidental loss of more than 6,000 megawatts of power grid, the ministry added, with its plants also halting operations. "Our teams are currently mobilised on the ground to gradually restore the grid over the next few hours," the ministry said.

The northern Kurdish region was spared. The autonomous territory has its own power sector and was able to provide round-the-clock state electricity to a third of its population.

Authorities later announced that power was being restored in stages in the provinces of Dhi Qar and Maysan, with the strategic port city of Basra expected to have electricity back by dawn on Tuesday.

Electricity shortages are a frequent complaint in Iraq, which is sometimes rocked by protests when outages worsen in the hot summer months.

'More intense'

Heatwaves in Iraq are "more intense and more frequent" than they were in the 20th century, meteorological service spokesman Amer al-Juburi said, blaming climate change and human factors related to "lack of diplomatic confidence".

In response, Pakistani voiced concern over India's attempt to involve third countries in the dispute, calling it a "futile attempt to pressure Islamabad, with Amb Khan saying that the referee failed to "lack of diplomatic confidence".

Momin's trip to the US, which included attending the retirement ceremony of US Gen Michael Kurilla, has been closely monitored by India's intelligence agencies, which concerns about the US-Pakistan ties.

While the visit was officially linked to Kurilla's farewell, Munir also reportedly made an unannounced stop in Washington for meetings with senior US officials further heightening Indian apprehensions.

Lady Reading Hospital Medical Teaching Institution, Peshawar, Pakistan

Applications are invited for the post of MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Qualifications:

- Ensuring clinical excellence in all aspects of hospital function.
- Auditing clinical practice.
- Developing new clinical programs, and
- Developing the annual clinical budget.
- The Medical Director will report to the Board of Governors.

The Medical Director will receive a faculty appointment at the appropriate level. The position permits approx. 20% of time for scholarly activities or clinical practice in the appropriate specialty.

Responsibilities:

- Ensuring clinical excellence in all aspects of hospital function.
- Auditing clinical practice.
- Developing new clinical programs, and
- Developing the annual clinical budget.
- The Medical Director will report to the Board of Governors.

Any attempt to approach or influence the selection committee will automatically disqualify the applicant; the decision of the selection committee will be final, subject to approval by the Board of Governors. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview. No correspondence regarding the process will be entertained.

Mr Yousef Jamal, Dept of Human resources
Lady Reading Hospital Medical Teaching Institution, Peshawar, Pakistan
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